

Leszek Kolakowski; ALIENATION OF REASON "Phil. or, if you prefer, anti-phil. doctrine"

Preface: "to grasp the meaning, i.e. inferences to be drawn"

Bring reader to closer understanding of its ~~social~~ function in OUR CULTURE

characteristics, themes: 1) Phenomenalism (NO diff. bet. essence & phenomenon)

2) Nominalism

3) Denial of cognitive value

4) Belief only in scientism

P. 97 "Positivism is a collection of PROHIBITIONS concerning human knowledge."

Wittgenstein - Carnap who merely wants to distinguish "not only rejects cognitive; bet. meaningful & unverifiable claims of metaphysics; statements they refuse it any recognition."

moderate wing which says SOLONG AS metaphysics makes no scientific claims, it is legitimate

P. 215: According to Mach's theory, science is an extension of animal experience & has no other meaning than the totality of experiences on which it is based... but then

"HOW CAN WE ACC'T. FOR THE PECULIAR FACT that over many CENTURIES ~~man~~ being has ascribed to 'REASON' the ability to discover 'necessary' features of the world & for so long a time failed to see that these features are fragments of imagination?.. (typed p.)"

P. 210: "science as a self-sufficient activity which exhausts ALL possible ways of appropriating world intellectually."

"THE LANGUAGE IT IMPOSES EXEMPTS US FROM THE DUTY OF SPEAKING UP IN LIFE'S most important conflicts."

Bertrand Russell scientific ideology "pragmatic interpretation of truth"

P. 211 HUSSERL interpreted 19th c. positivism as SYMPTOMATIC OF CULTURAL CRISIS but thought it possible to overcome by phil. means & devoted his lifelong labors to this task."

"The philosophical work of our day has found itself caught--to a great extent under the influence of positivist criticism--bet. the phil. of life & the lurid Manichean vision."

so-called phil. of life & empirio criticism have affinities with PRAGMATISM, (pp. 154-174) "show how a positivist postulates tilt into their opposites."

P. 156: "Peirce explicitly goes so far as to say that the meaning of the judgment is entirely exhausted in its practical consequences & acc'd'ing to him this is what defines PRAGMATISM." after 1890 he canhed, criticized phil. determinism, came out in favor of freedom, asserted new creations are possible.. abandoned his earlier nominalist interpretation of scientific laws" BUT it is earlier & more famous phil. which is imp. in his of positivism.

P. 160 spirit of utilitarianism carried to radical consequences & extended not only to the world of value but also purely COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS "What do I get out of this?" Dewey not so much interested in individual success--









(3)

... as from - well, you could almost say directly - Thus Lenin's view on enzymes.

critics are not only limited to those who were specifically devoted to that sort of writing but also those as a fringe there are none incidentally (flats) & see Phil N. P. S.

Which definitely deny the more or less vulgar interpretation. Yet one would think that the few remarks in P. N. ... would tally as against ...

Indeed, he leaves one having ...

But ... The above reader no doubt would be attracted

Later Human Energy

Irony, why is ... seen in Mach's ... statements ...

in Science

rel. Phil. Science - despite ...

... who was close to ...

LESZEK KOŁKOŃSKI THE ALIENATION OF REASON

The primary aim of this subjectivism without a subject was to formulate the idea of "pure" experience. For this purpose it was necessary to track down those elements in the current scientific image of the world that had been "thought into" it, not necessarily, not even primarily, in order to reject them entirely, but in order to demystify them, to grasp their origin, and to assign them their proper place. This kind of positivism, the most complete philosophical exposition of which is known as "empiricriticism" was concerned above all with genetic problems: it inquired into the origins and function of knowledge." (p. 104)

A second peculiarity of this philosophy, which also relates it to much else in the intellectual climate of the period, was what might be called its "realism": its abandonment of the idea that human knowledge is the truer the more it submits to reality and the more faithfully it mirrors the laws governing it. Like the literary naturalism of the period (in striking contrast to Zola's "experimental novel"), the empiricist interpretation of knowledge is in keeping with an idea of man as a being primarily characterized by his active role in the world." (p. 106)

Lenin, however, launched a sharp attack on empiricriticism, citing the philosophy expounded in such writings of Engels as were then known. His work is a defense of the materialist position, and in it he regarded empiricriticism as a subterfuge in which lurks a content identical with Berkeleyan idealism. . . . Lenin opposed to this doctrine a materialist and realist doctrine that he called "the theory of reflection." (p. 122)

Lenin agrees that there is no difference between the phenomenon and the Kantian thing-in-itself, but according to him this does not imply that the phenomenal world understood as a complex of impressions is the only accessible one; it implies only that there is nothing absolutely unknowable." (p. 129)

Lenin also uncompromisingly criticized his adversaries for accepting empiricritical interpretations of the most important philosophic categories. Among other things, he defended the concept of causality on the grounds that it describes actual necessary connections between events, and that it cannot be reduced to a purely empirical functional relation. He also defended Engels' view of the cognitive functions of time and space." (p. 130)

Lenin's book played an important part in the subsequent history of Marxism, particularly after Stalin summed up its main ideas in a popular article titled "On Dialectical and Historical Materialism," which for several years was obligatory reading in all Soviet Schools. . . . When we look back over the leading empiricritical ideas, we are especially struck by the following features: (1) the philosophical destruction of the subject;" (p. 151)

Subjectivism without Subj.  
Phil. destruction of the Subject

Escape from Commitment  
13016

Phil. destruction of the Subject

Subjectivism without a Subject

Empiricist

Realism

Reflection

Empiricist

Attack

Bar

Cher

True Place

Bar

LESZEK KOLIKOWSKI THE ALIENATION OF REASON

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*Subjectivism without a subject*  
*Current scientific image of the world*  
*Empirio-criticism*  
*Activism*  
*Voluntarism*  
*Materialist and realist doctrine*  
*Reflection*  
*Lenin's attack on*  
*Causality*  
*True*  
*False*  
*Stalin*  
*Be*

*Subjectivism without subject*  
*Phil. destruction of the subject*

*"Escape from commitment"*  
13016

*of positivistic & destructive*

*The historic context*

"The purpose of this book has been to present a few doctrines important in the history of positivism and to show that each of them is an aspect of the cultural background out of which it arose. Each phase of positivistic thought is a specific variation of the dominant intellectual style. At the same time, however, a diachronic continuity is clearly disclosed when we compare successive versions of positivism; . . . This leads to the question whether positivism also discloses cultural features justifying its treatment as a distinctive whole." (p. 207)

"Philosophers who, like Jaspers, do not look upon philosophy as a type of knowledge but only as an attempt to elucidate Existenz or even as an appeal to others to make such an attempt, do not transgress the positivist code. The latter attitude is nearly universal in present-day existentialist phenomenology. Awareness of fundamental differences between "investigation" and "reflection" between scientific "accuracy" and philosophic "precision," between "problems" and "questioning" or "mystery" is expressed by all existentialist philosophers, Heidegger as well as Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel." (p. 208)

*Escape from commitments*

"Suffering, death, ideological conflict, social clashes, antithetical values of any kind—all are declared out of bounds, matters we can only be silent about, in obedience to the principle of verifiability. Positivism, so understood is an act of escape from commitments, an escape masked as a definition of knowledge, a invalidating all such matters as mere figments of the imagination stemming from intellectual laziness. Positivism in this sense is the escapist's design for living." (p. 210)

*Neuralization of experience & inner essence*

The least restrained positivist-Avenarius—is the most radical. His neuralizing of experience is at the same time liquidation of the fictitious "inner essence" within which the "Outside" world supposedly manifests, discloses, or subjectivizes itself." (p. 214)

Like all allegedly metaphysical riddles, the whole problem of necessary truths results from the abuse of words, from grammatical inertia (hypostatizing abstract terms, substantializing verbs and adjectives, etc. - Hobbes said the last word on this subject). In short, according to the positivists, we are dealing with an error." (p. 215)

*error?*

*Great waste of energy squandered*

"The enormous efforts made in the history of culture to discover this paradise were wholly chimerical. Nonetheless, the vast amounts of energy squandered in these explorations and the extraordinary tenacity with which they were carried on are worth pondering, all the more because the explorers were perfectly aware of the technological inconsequences of their efforts. After all, what seventeenth-century writers called "moral certainty" - i.e. conditions under which we may recognize the truth of a given judgment although our reasons for doing so have no absolute character—is entirely sufficient in scientific thought. From the point of view of collected knowledge, the desire for an epistemological absolute, i.e., "metaphysical certainty," is fruitless, and those in question of this certainty were perfectly aware of the fact. And yet, we repeat, philosophy has never given up its attempt to constitute an autonomous "reason," independent of technological applications and irreducible to purely recording functions." (p. 216)

*What Heidegger does not explain is precisely what made him famous, the work as he makes it, the Husserlian idea he has never found but he kept it as a goal*



*of positivistic & distinctiveness*

*Diachronic continuity*

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*but apt. Energy squandered*

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*What Husserl does not explain is precisely what made him famous, for which as the motto is the Husserlian: "I don't know what he has meant by that" - "I don't know what he has meant by that" - "I don't know what he has meant by that"*